

# THE SILVER VENATORS



While the Spica Astraea use portals to travel instantaneously across great distances, the Venators are Spica huntresses who instead travel the angles of time as the Allshard demands. Each Venator is entrusted with a silvered key, an object forged in the fires of an Apothic Arch and attuned to the energies of the Allshard itself. With their key, the Venators can use a mirrored surface to step out of their immediate surrounds and travel through a narrow portal-like passage to emerge from that same point within 120 hours in the relative past or future.

The Venators are unique amongst the Spica in that they do not answer to a mortal Sircan in the priesthood but instead take instruction directly from specialised Cor Caroli known as Y'th. These warrior-scholar Cor Caroli dwell in a bubble-like library-realm formed adjacent to the Allshard itself, existing as a crossroads beyond the Earth and beyond the normal constraints of time. In that ever-shifting place, Venator Cohorts arrive to receive instruction and assignments by the Y'th. The Allshard have witnessed the regular flow of time and can see how this Shadow War threatens to irrevocably twist the outcome of the Order's Crusade on Earth. The actions of the adherents to the Hex, the Great Spirit, the Watchers and many others threatens to undo all that should come to pass after the 1870's. For the Allshard, their Crusade is humanity's only hope for a future and one which must be maintained at all costs. The followers and agents of the Hex and others must be countered whenever possible, powers and dark rituals that prolong life or otherwise twist and cheat fate are abhorrent to the Cor Caroli Y'th. At times such actions require even one of these incredible beings to leave their library-realm and accompany a Venator Cohort to Earth to deal with it.

Knowing that the Venators are on their trail, often the enemies of the Allshard will go to extreme lengths to remove all reflective surfaces from their places of power to deny the Venator easy access through their portals. Though distasteful, often the Venators find themselves dealing with more mundane targets. The driver whose foot slips on the pedal, slowing their vehicle and avoiding the animal in the road that would have killed him, must still meet his fate. The Union surgeon who cheated death and survived the trenches of the Ore War must still die before he can go on to save hundreds of lives.

Brigid Macleirgh leads Venator Cohort Silver. She is a strict disciplinarian and often seen as more unfeeling than even the alien Cor Caroli Y'th that they serve. Though their masters are inhuman, Brigid knows her Silver Venators are mortal and must rely on mortal means to stalk their prey. Through her Overseer Helm, she is given instruction in the field from the Y'th in their library-realm. This is useful for guidance in a rapidly evolving situation, but Brigid knows that wearing the Helm is not without cost. The Y'th see all...

Anna-Maria Golding is new recruit and a formidable grenadier, grateful for the opportunity service in the Venators brings. Only female Spica have the mental fortitude to survive translocation through time, and it is a privilege to be able to repay the Order in this manner. Anna-Maria, like the others, was recruited from the Spica by the Y'th. After returning to the Bastion Armature in the Rocky Mountains, she was visited by a Y'th, which appeared in a blinding light through the mirror in her sleeping cell. When told she had been claimed for a higher service to the Allshard, Anna-Maria wept. She took her oath there and then, was dressed in her new

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vestments and stepped into the mirror to meet her sisters in the Silver Venators.

Rebecca Bateman is a tremendous athlete, using her limited time between missions to hone her body further. Temporal portal travel makes Venators unable to use other types of portals and so once they have arrived, a Venator's physical fitness is essential. Trained to moving swiftly to acquire the target, Rebecca, like her sisters, wears hooded dark robes beneath which silver accessories gleam, brandishing brightly polished weapons. An impressive sight, but there is a reason behind this appearance. The Venators' ability to travel through the angles of time is linked to reflections and it is by utilising reflections such as those of a blade or bracer, that their keys can manifest portals through time or back to their library-realm sanctuary once their mission is at an end.

When a target proves elusive or is alerted to the approach of the Venators, the Spica huntresses can resort to marking their quarry. Though physical contact is initially needed, once a target is marked in such a fashion, the Venators can use their key to call on a Tyndaly'th Hound from their library-realm. These are guard creatures of the Y'th, bred by the

Cor Caroli from a species acquired millennia previously on an early Crusade. The Tyndaly'th are unique in all the species so far encountered by the Order in that a few survived when their homeworld was cleansed of life. The creatures were verified to be free from Hex taint and so were deemed sanctified for use in future Crusades. Ten generations of selective breeding means that when hunting their prey, the Hounds materialise through any mirrored surface in the immediate presence of the target. When a Hound begins to manifest, it materialises first as a shadow in the reflection, becoming more distinct before the very reflective surface warps to form the dreadful alien foulness of the creature. Once they have brought down their prey, if the Venator's cannot intercede in time, the Tyndaly'th use their long, hollow tongues to drain their victim's body-fluids, leaving vile blue pus or ichor as their spore. Even a member of the faithful might fall prey to a Hound if they inadvertently find themselves between the creature and its quarry or if the rite to summon them is performed imperfectly. The Sircan of the Order considers them abhorrent would not sanction their use if they had the authority to forbid it. Even the Venators find the Tyndaly'th a dreadful and difficult weapon of last resort.

